



Doors to Discovery

Charlotte Mason
Beginning Reading

AN OPEN-AND-GO GUIDE FOR TEACHING
CHILDREN TO READ BASED ON
CHARLOTTE MASON PRINCIPLES

WRITTEN BY

YEN CABAG

The first complete guide with materials for teaching children to read based on Charlotte Mason principles

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CHARLOTTE MASON'S PRINCIPLES

Written by

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Doors to Discovery: Charlotte Mason Beginning Reading

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CONTENTS

Charlotte Mason Homeschool: What is Reading?	8
Overview: The Different Phases of Learning to Read	12
Phase 0.5: Pre-Reading Lessons and Readiness	16
Phase 1: Recognizing the Alphabet	19
Phase 1: Suggested Lessons for Letter Names and Sounds	22
Phase 2: Word-Building and Early Spelling	23
Phase 2: Suggested Lesson for Word-Building and Early Spelling	28
Phase 2: Sight Words	29
Phase 2: Suggested Lesson Format for Sight Reading	36
Phase 2: Daily Lesson Plans for Word-Building + Sight-Reading	37
Daily Lessons	40
Alternating Word-Building and Sight Reading	40
Lesson 1. Word-building -at word family	41
Lesson 2. Sight Reading: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (first two lines)	42
Lesson 3. Word-building -an and -ad word family	43
Lesson 4. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (next two lines)	44
Lesson 5. Review + Game	45
Lesson 6. Word-building -ag and -ap word family	46
Lesson 7. Sight Reading: The Cow by Robert Louis Stevenson (first two lines)	47

Lesson 8. Word-building -et word family + review of word families starting with -a	48
Lesson 9. The Cow by Robert Louis Stevenson (next two lines)	49
Lesson 10. Review + Game	50
Lesson 11. Word-building -en and -ed word family	51
Lesson 12. Mary Had a Little Lamb (first two lines)	52
Lesson 13. Word-building -eg and -ep word family	53
Lesson 14. Mary Had a Little Lamb (next two lines)(next two lines)	54
Lesson 15. Review + Game	55
Lesson 16. Word-building -it word family + review of word families starting with -e	56
Lesson 17. Sight Reading: The Swing by Robert Louis Stevenson (first two lines)	57
Lesson 18. Word-building -in and -id word family	58
Lesson 19. The Swing by Robert Louis Stevenson (next two lines)	59
Lesson 20. Review + Game	60
Lesson 21. Word-building -ig and -ip word family	61
Lesson 22. Sight Reading: All Things Bright and Beautiful by Cecil Alexander (first two lines)	62
Lesson 23. Word-building -ot word family + review of word families starting with -i	63
Lesson 9. All Things Bright and Beautiful by Cecil Alexander (next two lines)	64
Lesson 25. Review + Game	65
Lesson 26. Word-building -on and -od word family	66

Lesson 27. Sight Reading: Lines and Squares by A.A. Milne (first two lines)	67
Lesson 28. Word-building -og and -op word family	68
Lesson 29. Lines and Squares by A.A. Milne (next three lines)	69
Lesson 30. Review + Game	70
Lesson 31. Word-building -ut word family + review of word families starting with -o	71
Lesson 32. Lines and Squares by A.A. Milne (next two lines)	72
Lesson 33. Word-building -un and -ud word family	73
Lesson 34. Lines and Squares by A.A. Milne (next two lines)	74
Lesson 35. Review + Game	75
Lesson 36. Word-building -ug and -ug word family	76
Lesson 37. Sight Reading: Lines and Squares (first two lines)	77
Lesson 38. Word-building -ang word family + review of word families starting with -u	78
Lesson 39. Lines and Squares (next two lines)	79
Lesson 40. Review + Game	80
Lesson 41. Word-building: -ath and -ast word family	81
Lesson 42. Sight Reading: Trees by Joyce Kilmer (first two lines)	82
Lesson 43. Word-building: long vowel sounds: a-e (-ate, -ade, -ake, -ane, -ape)	83
Lesson 44. Trees by Joyce Kilmer (next two lines)	85
Lesson 45. Review + Game	86
Lesson 46. Word-building: long vowel sounds: i-e (-ide, -ine, -ite)	87

Lesson 47. Sight Reading: The Arrow and the Song by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (first two lines)	88
Lesson 48. Word-building: long vowel sounds: o-e (-ode, -one, -ope)	90
Lesson 49. The Arrow and the Song by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (first two lines)	92
Lesson 50. Review + Game	93
Lesson 51. Word-building: long vowel sounds: -ee and -eet	94
Lesson 52. Sight Reading: The Shepherd by William Blake (first two lines)	95
Lesson 53. Word-building: long vowel sounds: -eat and -ear (/ee/ sound)	96
Lesson 54. The Shepherd by William Blake (next two lines)	97
Lesson 55. Review + Game	98
Lesson 56. Word-building: sn /u/ sound -oo (-ook) and -all	99
Lesson 57. Sight Reading: Wynken, Blynken, and Nod by Eugene Field (first four lines)	100
Lesson 58. Word-building: ou sound -ouse, and -ight	101
Lesson 59. Wynken, Blynken, and Nod by Eugene Field (next four lines)	102
Lesson 60. Review + Game	103
Phase 3: Progressing to Reading Sentences/Prose	104
Appendix I: Looking into other phonics rules	106
Appendix II. A Note on Dyslexia	107
Appendix III. Printable Pages	119
Till Next Time	151
About the Author	152

Charlotte Mason Homeschool: What is Reading?

Ahhh... Isn't this every homeschooling mom or homeschooling-mom-wannabe's greatest fear: not being able to teach our children to read!

In this post, we want to share an overview of reading lessons as outlined by Charlotte Mason. We hope to elaborate on each phase in future posts, but we believe getting an overview is just as important so we understand that it's a process that cannot be rushed.

What is Reading?

"Knowledge of Arbitrary Symbols—In the first place, let us bear in mind that reading is not a science nor an art. Even if it were, the children must still be the first consideration with the educator; but it is not. Learning to read is no more than picking up, how we can, a knowledge of certain arbitrary symbols for objects and ideas." (Charlotte Mason Home Education Vol 1 Page 215)

Here we have a definition of reading as a "knowledge of arbitrary symbols." Indeed, that is the most basic definition of learning to read, being able to understand symbols that stand for certain objects or ideas. When you see the word "dog," it only means something to you when it conjures up an image or idea of the four-legged creature that comes happily barking and licking your face whenever you come home!

How To Teach Reading

There are absolutely no right and necessary 'steps' to reading, each of which leads to the next; there is no true beginning, middle, or end. For the arbitrary symbols we must know in order to read are not letters, but words. (Vol 1 Page 215)

1. No one way to teach reading

Miss Mason lays out her principles about teaching reading, and she starts with saying that there is no right or only way to teach reading. While this is a manual to help you teach your child to read, do understand that it's not about following

a certain number of steps. Some children learn to read all on their own, while others need a little more hand-holding.

We go back to Miss Mason's first principle: A child is born a person. We understand that every child is unique. For our family, I bought and happily used a certain reading curriculum which worked for my oldest but did not work for my second. We teach the child, not the curriculum.

2. Focus on learning words

Here Miss Mason tells us that reading is not just about knowing letters; our goal is to know words, because it's words that mean something to us. The letters are just tools to get us to identify words.

Let's go back to her explanation of how reading is about being able to read words and not individual letters:

By way of illustration, consider the delicate differences of sound represented by the letter 'o' in the last sentence; to analyse and classify the sounds of 'o' in 'for,' 'symbols,' 'know,' 'order,' 'to,' 'not,' and 'words,' is a curious, not especially useful, study for a philologist, but a curious and inappropriate one for a child. It is time we faced the fact that the letters which compose an English word are full of philological interest, and that their study will be a valuable part of education by-and-by; but meantime, sound and letter-sign are so loosely wedded in English, that to base the teaching of reading on the sounds of the letters only, is to lay up for the child much analytic labour, much mental confusion, due to the irregularities of the language; and some little moral strain in making the sound of a letter in a given word fall under any of the 'sounds' he has been taught. (Vol 1, Page 215).

So if our goal is not just to teach letters, what is our goal?

3. Learning words letter sounds has the goal of having our child know more words

Here Miss Mason lays out a general plan:

“definitely, what is it we propose in teaching a child to read? (a) that he shall know at sight, say, some thousand words; (b) That he shall be able to build up new words with the elements of these. Let him learn ten new words a day, and in twenty weeks he will be to some extent able to read, without any question as to the number of letters in a word. For the second, and less important, part of our task, the child must know the sounds of the letters, and acquire power to throw given sounds into new combinations.

Her practical plan involves helping the child acquire the knowledge of some thousand words, but which form a foundation for him to build new words. She also mentions that yes, the child should know letter sounds, for the goal of using those sounds to form words. Remember, our goal is for our child to know how to read words.

4. We connect the arbitrary symbols with objects or ideas the child cares about

What we want is a bridge between the child's natural interests and those arbitrary symbols with which he must be acquainted, and which, as we have seen, are words, and not letters. These Symbols should be interesting.—The child cares for things, not words; his analytic power is very small; his observing faculty is exceedingly quick and keen; nothing is too small for him, he will spy out the eye of a fly; nothing is too intricate, he delights in puzzles. But nothing he learns to know by looking at it, is a thing which interests him. Therefore, this is the key to reading.

Here we see that one of the most important ways to teach reading is to connect the words to things that the child cares about.

What Not To Do When Teaching Reading

Interestingly, Miss Mason adds a comment on what NOT to do when teaching reading:

No meaningless combinations of letters, no cla, cle, cli, clo, clu, no ath, eth, ith, oth, uth, should be presented to him. The child should be taught from the first to regard the printed word as he already regards the spoken word, as the symbol of fact or idea of full of interest. How easy to read 'robin redbreast,' 'buttercups and daisies'; the number of

letters in the words is no matter; the words themselves convey such interesting ideas that the general form and look of them fixes itself on the child's brain by the same law of association of ideas which makes it easy to couple the objects with their spoken names. Having got a word fixed on the sure peg of the idea it conveys, the child will use his knowledge of the sounds of the letters to make up other words containing the same elements with great interest. When he knows 'butter' he is quite ready to make 'mutter' by changing the b for an m." (Vol 1 Page 216)

For this reason, we include actual words in the word building lessons in this material, but we also encourage you to use your own knowledge of words to choose words that do mean something and skip over words that don't. Even if the child is able to sound them out, they will not make any sense to him and will therefore not engage his interest.

SAMPLE

Overview: The Different Phases of Learning to Read

Here are the different phases of how a child learns to read, as explained by Miss Mason:

Phase 0.5: Expressing interest

Many a mother gets all excited to teach her child to read, but when the child is not ready, it can only result in much frustration for all parties involved. Instead, we can take our cue from Miss Mason's own words:

When should he begin? Whenever his box of letters begins to interest him. The baby of two will often be able to name half a dozen letters; and there is nothing against it so long as the finding and naming of letters is a game to him. But he must not be urged, required to show off, teased to find letters when he has his mind set on other play. (vol 1 page 203)

Did you see that? A two-year-old baby may well be able to identify some letters, but it's not up to us to force him to do so, or to get him to "study" when he's not interested. Perhaps a good thing to remember at this point is, "Every child is born a person."

Phase I: Recognizing letters

According to Miss Mason, most children learn the alphabet as a matter of course:

As for his letters, the child usually teaches himself. He has his box of ivory letters and picks out p for pudding, b for blackbird, h for horse, big and little, and knows them both.

But for the Charlotte Mason method, we add an emphasis on observation: we encourage the child to look carefully at the letters, and we make these shapes in the air which he then names. This gives our children a closer relation to the letters and sounds.

With this, we can see that Miss Mason does not treat reading and writing separately; instead, they are parts of the same whole. Take a look at how she describes it:

But the learning of the alphabet should be made a means of cultivating the child's observation: he should be made to see what he looks at. Make big B in the air, and let him name it; then let him make round O, and crooked S, and T for Tommy, and you name the letters as the little finger forms them with unsteady strokes in the air. To make the small letters thus from memory is a work of more art, and requiring more careful observation on the child's part. A tray of sand is useful at this stage. The child draws his finger boldly through the sand, and then puts a back to his D; and behold, he has an essay in making a straight line and a curve. But the devices for making the learning of the 'A B C' interesting are endless. There is no occasion to hurry through it: let him learn one form at a time, and know it so well that he can pick out the s, say, big and little, in a page of large print. Let him say d for duck, dog, doll, thus. d-uck, d-og, prolonging the sound of the initial consonant, and at last sounding the e, the ee, but d', the mere sound of the consonant separated as far as possible from the following vowel. (vol 1 page 203)

Phase 2: Word-building and phonics

Miss Mason calls this activity "Word-making." When we look at it, this seems to be the modern-day equivalent of teaching phonics:

The first exercises in the making of words will be just as pleasant to the child. Exercises treated as a game, which yet teach the powers of the letters, will be better to begin with than actual sentences. Take up two of his letters and make the syllable 'at': tell him it is the word we use when we say 'at home,' 'at school.' Then put b to 'at'—bat; c to 'at'—cat; fat, hat, mat, sat, rat, and so on. First, let the child say what the word becomes with each initial consonant to 'at,' in order to make hat, pat, cat. Let the syllables all be actual words which he knows. Set the words in a row, and let him read them off. Do this with the short vowel sounds in combination with each of the consonants, and the child will learn to read off dozens of words of three letters, and will master the short-vowel sounds with initial and final consonants without effort. (vol 1 page 203)

Phase 2: Early spelling

As mentioned above, Miss Mason does not distinguish between reading and spelling. In fact, reading lessons in the Charlotte Mason method involves what she calls “early spelling,” as described below:

Accustom him from the first to shut his eyes and spell the word he has made. This is important. Reading is not spelling, nor is it necessary to spell in order to read well; but the good speller is the child whose eye is quick enough to take in the letters which compose it, in the act of reading off a word, and this is a habit to be acquired from the first: accustom him to see the letters in the word, and he will do so without effort. (vol 1 page 203)

Phase 2: Sight words

The CM method also deals systematically with sight words, using familiar pieces of poetry or prose. In Volume 1 of Home Education, Miss Mason takes the example of the familiar rhyme “twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” as follows:

The teacher must be content to proceed very slowly, securing the ground under her feet as she goes. Say—

*“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are,”*

is the first lesson; just those two lines. Read the passage for the child, very slowly, sweetly, with just expression, so that it is pleasant to him to listen. Point to each word as you read. Then point to ‘twinkle,’ ‘wonder,’ ‘star,’ ‘what,’—and expect the child to pronounce each word in the verse taken promiscuously; then, when he shows that he knows each word by itself, and not before, let him read the two lines with clear enunciation and expression: insist from the first on clear, beautiful reading, and do not let the child fall into a dreary monotone, no more pleasant to himself than to his listener. Of course, by this time he is able to say the two lines; and let him say them clearly and beautifully. In his after lesson he will learn the rest of the little poem. (vol 1 page 205)

Phase 3: Reading Sentences

The Reading of Prose.—At this stage, his reading lessons must advance so slowly that he may just as well learn his reading exercises, both prose and poetry, as recitation lessons. Little poems suitable to be learned in this way will suggest themselves at once; but perhaps prose is better, on the whole, as offering more of the words in everyday use, of Saxon origin, and of anomalous spelling. Short fables, and such graceful, simple prose as we have in Mrs Gatty's *Parables from Nature*, and, still better, in Mrs [Anna Laetitia] Barbauld's prose poems [probably *Hymns in Prose for Children*], are very suitable. Even for their earliest reading lessons, it is unnecessary to put twaddle into the hands of children. (Vol 1 page 204-205)

After being able to read words, your child will then want to be able to read phrases and sentences, and eventually, whole pages, chapters, and books.

If you have been reading aloud consistently with your child, it may come naturally to him to read from left to right, if not, it would help to point to the words as you read to help him get used to the direction of reading: left to right and top to bottom.

An important thing to remember when letting your child practice reading sentences is this: “even for the earliest reading lessons, it is unnecessary to put twaddle into the hands of children.”

Teaching Reading in the CM Method

Teaching reading doesn't have to be complicated. We hope to elaborate on each of these phases in the next few pages, so grab a cup of coffee and keep reading!

Phase 0.5: Pre-Reading Lessons and Readiness

Materials needed

- Box of letters (wooden blocks, ivory, or wooden letters)
- Sand tray

Charlotte Mason Reading Lessons: Readiness

One of the most highly-debated subjects when it comes to our children's education is this: at what age should a child learn to read? If you're like most parents, you can be pressured by all that you see around you, including on social media, about toddlers who are happily reading books aloud. It doesn't help that other well-meaning parents are proud to show their little ones' newly-acquired skill!

In this post we talk about what Charlotte Mason affirms is the first step in reading lessons: readiness.

Expressing Interest: A Sign of Readiness

According to Miss Mason, a child usually learns letters on his own accord:

"Let the child alone, and he will learn the alphabet for himself; but few mothers can resist the pleasure of teaching it; and there is no reason why they should, for this kind of learning is no more than play to the child, and if the alphabet be taught to the little student, his appreciation of both form and sound will be cultivated. When should he begin? Whenever his box of letters begins to interest him. The baby of two will often be able to name half a dozen letters; and there is nothing against it so long as the finding and naming of letters is a game to him. But he must not be urged, required to show off, teased to find letters when his heart is set on other play. (Volume 1 pages 202-203)

Is it possible that most mothers struggle with teaching the alphabet, not because the child isn't able to learn, but because it isn't the right time or way?

Miss Mason says we begin reading lessons whenever the child expresses interest in his box of letters. But take note that we are supposed to keep it a game; it should never cross over to testing our children, or reprimanding them for making a mistake, or required to give the right answer to family and friends.

Practical Things to Do for Pre-Reading and Readiness

From Miss Mason's principles, we can see a few things we can do so we can encourage learning, before we even see if our child is ready to learn to read:

1. Keep a box of letters handy.

"As for his letters, the child usually teaches himself. He has a box of ivory letters and picks out p for pudding, b for blackbird, h for horse, big and little, and knows them both. (Vol.1 page 201)

2. Encourage observation.

"But the learning of the letters should be made a means of cultivating the child's observation: he should be made to see what he looks at. Make big B in the air, and let him name it; then let him make round O, and crooked S, and T for Tommy, and you name the letters as the little fingers form them with unsteady strokes in the air. To make the small letters thus from memory is a work of more art, and requires more careful observation on the child's part. A tray of sand is useful at this stage. The child draws his finger boldly through the sand, and then puts a back to his D; and behold, his first essay in making a straight line and a curve. (Vol. 1 page 201)

3. Have a tray of sand for regular 'play.'

"Our children learn their letters without any teaching. We always keep by us a shallow table drawer, the bottom covered half an inch deep with sand. Before they are two, the babies make round O and crooked S, and T for Tommy, and so on, with dumpy, uncertain little fingers. The elder children teach the little ones by way of a game."

"The sand is capital! We have various devices, but none so good as that. Children love to be doing. The funny, shaky lines the little finger makes in the sand will be ten times as interesting as the shapes the eye sees. (vol 1 page 208)

Enjoying the Pre-Reading Stage

Yes, we may be excited to start our child learning how to read. But we encourage you to enjoy the pre-reading stage as well, and watch for the signs of your child's readiness. You can save yourself a lot of unnecessary frustration and tears!

SAMPLE

Phase 1: Recognizing the Alphabet

Materials recommended

- Box of letters (wooden blocks, ivory, or wooden letters)
- Sand tray
- Whiteboard or white paper and black marker
- Pictures or list of objects with the same beginning letter sounds
(We recommend you to create your own list to make sure you use objects that your child is familiar with)
- Printable letters found on the Appendix

Charlotte Mason Reading Lesson: Recognizing Letters

Teaching our children to read does not have to be complicated or daunting. Many children learn to read on their own, while others may require a little bit of hand-holding.

Perhaps the pressure to teach children to read at younger ages may have resulted to many of the frustrations that parents and teachers face. Charlotte Mason lays out a few guidelines to determine reading readiness:

Let the child alone, and he will learn the alphabet for himself: but few mothers can resist the pleasure of teaching it; and there is no reason why they should, for this kind of learning is no more than play to the child, and if the alphabet be taught to the little student, his appreciation of both form and sound will be cultivated. When should he begin? Whenever his box of letters begins to interest him. The baby of two will often be able to name half a dozen letters; and there is nothing against it so long as the finding and naming of letters is a game to him. But he must not be urged, required to show off, teased to find letters when his heart is set on other play. (vol 1 pg 201-202)

Once you know that your child is ready to start learning, we can go into the first phase, which is recognizing letters and their sounds.

Recognizing the Alphabet

Let's take a look at how we can train our child to recognize his letters.

1. Identify letter names.

"The Alphabet.—As for his letters, the child usually teaches himself. He has his box of ivory letters and picks out p for pudding, b for blackbird, h for horse, big and little, and knows them both. (Vol 1 Page 201)

Miss Mason says that many children usually teach themselves their letters. When you have a stock of wooden (or ivory, in Miss Mason's writings) letters, a child can play with them regularly and through play you can start calling out the names of the letters. This is usually the first step and is part of the playtime related to reading readiness.

2. Cultivating observation: draw big letters in the air.

But the learning of the alphabet should be made a means of cultivating the child's observation: he should be made to see what he looks at. Make big B in the air, and let him name it; then let him make round O, and crooked S, and T for Tommy, and you name the letters as the little finger forms them with unsteady strokes in the air. (Vol 1, Page 201)

But it's more than just knowing how to read the letters. Charlotte Mason recommends us to use the letters as a means of "cultivating the child's observation." She suggests taking the observation from just a letter on the page to shapes in the air. First, we are the shape and let the child name it; then we encourage the child to make the shape in the air with his own finger, and then we name it for him.

3. Cultivate observation: draw small letters in a sand tray.

To make the small letters thus from memory is a work of more art, and requires more careful observation on the child's part. A tray of sand is useful at this stage. The child

draws his finger boldly through the sand, and then puts a back to his D; and behold, his first essay in making a straight line and a curve.

Miss Mason differentiates the effort required to form the big and small letters, describing small letters as “work of more art” and requiring “more careful observation.” She recommends using a tray of sand for drawing the small letters.

4. Practice picking out the letters in a page of large print

But the devices for making the learning of the 'A B C' interesting are endless. There is no occasion to hurry the child: let him learn one form at a time, and know it so well that he can pick out the d's, say, big and little, in a page of large print.

While this is not officially a part of reading lessons, Miss Mason encourages the child to know his letters so well that he can pick them out on a page of large print. As such, we can view this as a “test” to see just how well our child knows each letter.

5. Phonics: Practice the beginning letter sounds of words.

Let him say d for duck, dog, doll, thus: d-uck, d-og, prolonging the sound of the initial consonant, and let him say d alone, not dee, but d', the “mere sound of the consonant separated as far as possible from the following vowel.

As part of learning the letters, we also teach our children what each letter sounds like, and we do that best by showing the letter sounds at the start of words. This is the beginning of phonics training for our children.

Charlotte Mason Reading Lessons Can Be Simple

From these steps, we hope that you can see that teaching our child to read doesn't have to be complicated.

Phase 1: Suggested Lessons for Letter Names and Sounds

Example Lesson 1. Letter Aa

Letter Play

Play with letter blocks/wooden letters.
Find letter A.

Optional: Make the letter A using clay, Legos, popsicle sticks, or any other material on hand.

Identifying on Paper

Write large cut out different letters on a whiteboard or piece of blank white paper. Ask your child to find all the letter

Air Drawing Time

Draw a large letter A in the air.
Encourage your child to imitate you.

Sand Drawing Time

Draw the small letter A in the sand.
Encourage your child to imitate you.

Letter Sounds Play

Say the sound of the letter A, and say a word that starts with the short a (ahhh) sound. (apple, ant)

Encourage your child to think up words that start with the short a (ahhh) sound.

Games

Play a game where you both take turns to think up a word that begins with the short a (ahhh) sound.

Phase 2: Word-Building and Early Spelling

Materials recommended:

- Box of letters (ivory or wooden letters)
- Sand tray
- Printable letters found on previous section
- Printout of Word Families printable on the Appendix

Word-Building and Early Spelling

Many parents seem to worry about teaching their child to read. In this post, we hope to share some insights from Charlotte Mason's advice on reading lessons.

Once your child is able to identify letters and letter sounds, we can move to the next phase of Charlotte Mason reading lessons: word-making and early spelling.

Word-Building in Charlotte Mason Reading Lessons

How do we teach word-building or word-making in our Charlotte Mason reading lessons? Here are some practical steps:

1. Treat it as a game.

Charlotte Mason believes in making reading lessons enjoyable for the child. Her recommendations for reading lessons include tips for using words that the child can relate to.

Word-making. The first exercises in the making of words will be just as pleasant to the child. Exercises treated as a game, which yet teach the powers of the letters, will be better to begin with than actual sentences. (Vol 1 Page 202)

2. Start with forming the syllable 'at' and use words he knows.

Take up two of his letters and make the syllable 'at': tell him it is the word we use when we say 'at home,' 'at school.' Then put b to 'at'—bat; c to 'at'—cat; fat, hat, mat, sat, rat, and so on.

First, let the child say what the word becomes with each initial consonant to 'at,' in order to make hat, pat, cat. Let the syllables all be actual words which he knows. Set the words in a row, and let him read them off. (Vol 1 Page 202)

Form the syllable 'at' and then form words from it by adding a different beginning sound. Miss Mason emphasizes that we use words the child already knows. This is a crucial point, because words that mean anything will not engage your child.

(In our modern day, we call these CVC or consonant-vowel-consonant combinations.)

3. Form other syllables using short vowel sounds.

Do this with the short vowel sounds in combination with each of the consonants, and the child will learn to read dozens of words of three letters, and will master the short-vowel sounds with initial and final consonants without effort. (Vol 1 Page 202)

4. Let the child form words himself.

Before long he will do the lesson for himself. 'How many words can you make with "en" and another letter, with "od" and another letter?' etc. Do not hurry him. (Vol 1 Page 202)

Soon, encourage your child to form the 3-letter words himself.

(SAMPLE CUTS OFF HERE AND CONTINUES AT A LATER PAGE)

(SAMPLE CONTINUES)

Phase 2: Sight Words

Charlotte Mason reading lessons take into account the most important parts of learning to read. We begin with teaching the child the letter sounds, then encourage him in building words with his letters.

But we also realize that the English language does not always follow the same rules of phonics. In fact, it contains a lot of words that we need to know by sight.

Let's take a look at what Miss Mason has to say:

If words were always made on a given pattern in English, if the same letter always represented the same sounds, learning to read would be an easy matter; for the child would soon acquire the few elements of which all words would, in that case, be composed. But many of our English words do not follow any such law unto itself: there is nothing for it, but the child must learn to know each word at sight. He must recognise 'which,' precisely as he recognises 'B,' because he has never before, been made to look at it with interest, so that the pattern of the word is stamped upon his retentive brain. This process should go on side by side with the learning of the powers of the letters; for the more variety you can throw into his reading lessons, the more will the child enjoy them. Lessons in word-making help him to take intelligent interest in words; but his progress in the art of reading depends chiefly on the 'reading at sight' lessons. (Vol 1 Page 203-204)

Materials Needed for a Sight-Reading Lesson

"I wish some publisher would provide us with what we want—nursery rhymes, in good bold type, with boxes of loose words to match, a separate box, or division, for each page, so that the child may not be confused by having too many words to hunt amongst. The point is that he should see, and look at, the new word many times, so that its shape becomes impressed upon his brain."

In a Charlotte Mason reading lesson on sight words, she recommends cutting and pasting several copies of the same nursery rhyme into a sheet of paper.

Admittedly, it may take a bit of effort to print and cut the words to nursery rhymes—although in reality, it's so much easier to do in our day and age than it probably was in Miss Mason's time! After all, we can easily print several pages of a given nursery rhyme and then just cut them out.

In order to make things even easier for you, we have compiled printable word cards in the Appendix of this book to use with the Lessons included in this book.

Steps for Sight Reading Lessons

Here are some steps for doing sight reading lessons for your child.

1. Interest the child in the text by showing the word for it.

This is how the child learns that he gets the notion of the table; he sees several tables; he finds they have legs, by which you can scramble up; very often covers which you may "which you may pull off; and on them many things lie, good and pleasant for a baby to enjoy; sometimes you can pull these things off the table, and they go down with a bang, which is nice. The grown-up people call this pleasant thing, full of many interests, 'table,' and, by-and-by, baby says 'table' too; and the word 'table' comes to mean, in a vague way, all this to him. 'Around table,' 'on the table,' and so on, form part of the idea of 'table' to him. In the same way baby chimes in when his mother sings. She says, 'Baby, sing,' and, by-and-by, notions of 'sing,' 'kiss,' 'love,' dawn on his brain."

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Phase 2: Daily Lesson Plans for Word-Building + Sight-Reading

How to Use These Lesson Plans

We recommend using these lesson plans only if your child already knows his letters and letter sounds. These are just suggested lessons and pacing; feel free to adjust depending on your child's own pace.

This plan contains 60 Lessons; if you do every day, 5 days a week, you will be able to finish this in half of a school year. However, our goal is not just to finish the lessons; the goal is to help our child become good and strong readers. Remember to pay attention to your own child's progress and don't be afraid to adjust the pacing, whether to speed it up or slow it down.

Important note #1: If you need to slow down the pace, it does not mean your child is slow; it just means you are adjusting to the way he or she learns best, and that's a success in itself.

We recommend doing these lessons at least four days a week, because reading skills develop better with consistent practice. On the fifth day, which we include in this schedule as every fifth lesson, you may opt to do either or both of the following:

- a quick review of concepts learned that week, and/or
- a literacy or numeracy game such as those suggested in [Talino CM Curriculum Kinder Guide](#).

Important note #2: If you suspect your child to have dyslexia, please go to the [Appendix](#) for some added reading. Meanwhile, we would recommend daily practice (if possible, including weekends, or at least Saturday) with short lessons kept enjoyable; the daily review and practice is necessary to help the dyslexic child retain the concepts he's learning.

Materials Needed For These Reading Lessons

For these lessons, you will need the following materials (all printable files found in the Appendix with their labels):

□ Letter cards

You may print just one copy of these in cardstock since we intentionally made doubles of letters that you may need two of in any given word. However, if you would like to be more sure of not missing a letter, feel free to print at least two copies of these cards.

□ Word families cards

These are sized to be the same as the letter cards so you can use the consonant letter cards together with the word families cards.

□ Sight Word cards for the given rhyme/poem/hymn/poem: (5 copies each)

Important instructions for the Sight Word Cards: The Appendix contains the printable pages for the rhymes/poems used in these lessons. Please print each page into 5 copies of cardstock and cut them accordingly. Then, store the words for the same rhyme/poem in an individual envelope and label each envelope so that you can locate the set you need at any given time.

We recommend you to print them in five copies each so that your child can find several of the same words each time. However, if you feel that printing 5 copies of the word cards for each lesson is too expensive, you may adjust it to the bare minimum of 4 copies each.

□ Optional add-on:

The sight word lessons used in this book include poems that are also included in our Beginning CM Poetry Book. You may opt to add that item to expose your child to these poems and many more on a more regular basis.

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Daily Lessons
Alternating Word-Building
and Silent Reading

SAMPLE

Lesson 1. Word-building -at word family

Required Lessons	Optional Add-on
<p>Parent Word-Building</p> <p>Prepare the consonants and the letters “a” and “t” or word family card “-at”</p> <p>Add one consonant at a time at the beginning of “-at”</p> <p>(e.g. bat, cat, fat, hat, mat, pat, rat, sat, vat)</p> <p>Read the resulting word and/or ask your child to read the word.</p>	<p>Identifying on Paper</p> <p>Write the words in random order in large print on the board or a piece of white blank paper.</p> <p>Ask your child to practice reading them aloud.</p>
<p>Child Word-Building</p> <p>Encourage the child to build the words on his own and to say them out loud.</p>	<p>Matching words to objects</p> <p>If available, have your child point to objects or pictures that the word refers to. (If you have the extra time and skill, you might draw the objects. This may not be necessary because the child will already be learning to associate the word with the item.)</p>
<p>Early Spelling</p> <p>Choose a word. Ask the child to read it.</p> <p>Ask him to close his eyes and orally spell out the letters that make up the word.</p>	<p>Practice writing</p> <p>Have your child draw the three letters in the air or on his sand tray.</p>

Lesson 2. Sight Reading: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (first two lines)

Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky

Recite the material together

Parent reads the chosen nursery rhyme/poem/ song. Then, parent and child read/ recite it together, with the parent pointing to the words as you read.

Pick words from the box

Write a word in random order on the board. Read the word aloud. Then ask your child to find one of the same word from your box of words.

As you write words on your board, put them down in one column.

(Suggested order: wonder, little, how, what, twinkle, you, little, are)

Arrange words in columns

Ask your child to arrange his word cards in the same order as the column you wrote on the board.

Arrange words by dictation

Dictate the rhyme, and ask your child to arrange the words in the order that you say them.

Read the rhyme

Have your child read the lines first on his arranged word cards, and then in the printed material.

Lesson 3. Word-building -an and -ad word family

Required Lessons	Optional Add-on
<p>Parent Word-Building</p> <p>Prepare the consonants and the letters “a” and “t” or word family card “-at”</p> <p>Add one consonant at a time at the beginning of “-at”</p> <p>(e.g. bat, cat, fat, hat, mat, pat, rat, sat, vat)</p> <p>Read the resulting word and/or ask your child to read the word.</p>	<p>Identifying on Paper</p> <p>Write the words in random order in large print on the board or a piece of white paper</p> <p>Ask your child to pronounce reading them aloud.</p>
<p>Child Word-Building</p> <p>Encourage the child to read the words on his own and to say them aloud.</p>	<p>Matching words to objects</p> <p>If available, have your child point to objects or pictures that the word refers to. (If you have the extra time and skill, you might draw the objects. This may not be necessary because the child will already be learning to associate the word with the item.)</p>
<p>Early Spelling</p> <p>Choose a word. Ask the child to read it.</p> <p>Ask him to close his eyes and orally spell out the letters that make up the word.</p>	<p>Practice writing</p> <p>Have your child draw the three letters in the air or on his sand tray.</p>

Lesson 4. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (next two lines)

Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky

Recite the material together

Parent reads the chosen nursery rhyme/poem/ song. Then, parent and child read/ recite it together, with the parent pointing to the words as you read.

Pick words from the box

Write a word in random order on the board. Read the word aloud. Then ask your child to find cards with the same word from your box of words.

As you write words on your board, put them down in one column.

(Suggested order: sky, up, diamond, high, world, like, above, the, so, in)

Arrange words in columns

Ask your child to arrange his word cards in the same order as the column you wrote on the board.

Arrange words by dictation

Dictate the rhyme, and ask your child to arrange the words in the order that you say them.

Read the rhyme

Have your child read the lines first on his arranged word cards, and then in the printed material.

Lesson 5. Review + Game

Review of Past Days' Lessons

Prepare the needed letter cards for review. (Consonant cards + the word families cards)

Dictate words from the past days' lessons for your child to arrange with his letter cards.

Game

Play a game of Spot-It.

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Appendix II. A Note on Dyslexia

Since this is a book on how to teach children to read, we thought it was important to have a section on dyslexia.

Dyslexia is most commonly known as a learning disability that makes it difficult for a person to learn to read. It's often portrayed (at least, in movies) as a child who can't decipher the words because he tends to flip the letters that look alike, or these letters are "dancing" all over the place.

In the past, dyslexia was viewed as something that needed to be "fixed." Thankfully, with the increasing awareness of dyslexia being a form of neurodivergence, we've slowly but surely started to learn the uniqueness of this brain wiring. More and more studies have come up showing the gift that dyslexia can be.

What is Dyslexia?

First, let's look at what the word actually means. The word dyslexia comes from the Greek prefix "dys" which means malfunction or difficulty. The root word "lexis" means language. This means that literally, the word dyslexia means "difficulty with language."

This in itself tells us that dyslexia is not just a struggle with reading, but with anything related to language. This may include oral communication, reading, spelling, understanding math terms, and anything else that can involve language.

From the book How to Detect and Manage Dyslexia by Philomena Ott, we read this quote from The Orton Dyslexia Society Research Committee: "Dyslexia is manifest by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems with reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling."

When we understand this broader view, we can see more of how dyslexia can affect a person's daily life, not just his reading.

Secondly, more recent research has started to identify dyslexia not as an inherent "disorder" but a neurodivergent brain wiring. This means that it's not something to be fixed, but a part of a person's natural bent, which comes with both weaknesses to work around and strengths to celebrate. (If you want to learn more about neurodivergence, check out [Neurodivergence Help.Com](http://NeurodivergenceHelp.Com).)

Myths and Truths about Dyslexia

Because dyslexia is one of the most commonly known—but just as commonly misunderstood—neurodivergence, we want to unpack a few myths.

Myth #1. You can acquire dyslexia from your upbringing.

No, dyslexia is not something you get from any lack in your upbringing. Instead, it has been proven to be something that people are born with. In fact, some research has shown a possible genetic link, with dyslexia tending to run in families, and more often seen in males than in females.

Myth #2. It's just a psychological.

Some resources describe dyslexia symptoms as showing up as a result of early experiences with shame in poor reading. While this is a common experience for children with dyslexia, it is not the cause; in fact, it is more likely an effect of the inherent struggle with learning to read.

More recent research has shown that dyslexia is a neurological condition, a natural brain wiring that results in this specific way of processing information.

Symptoms of Dyslexia

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Appendix III. Printable Pages

Letter Cards: Please print one copy of each of the following two pages on card stock.

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p
q	r	s	t

u	v	w	x
y	z	a	a
e	e	n	g
s	s	t	c
l	l	t	h

Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) cards

Word Family Cards: Please print one copy on card stock

at	an	ad	ag	ap
et	en	ed	eg	ep
it	in	id	ig	ip
ot	on	od	og	op
ut	un	ud	ug	up

Lesson 2. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (first two lines)

Sight Reading Word Cards: Please print five copies on card stock

twinkle	little
star	how
I	wonder
what	you
are	

Lesson 4. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star (next two lines)

Sight Reading Word Cards: Please print five copies on card stock

up	above
the	world
so	high
like	a
diamond	in
sky	

Lesson 7. The Cow by Robert Louis Stevenson (first two lines)

Sight Reading Word Cards: Please print five copies on card stock

the	friendly
cow	all
red	and
white	I
love	with
all	my
heart	

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know our latest updates!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Based in Iloilo City, Yen Cabag is a homeschooling mom, writer, entrepreneur, and Charlotte Mason coach, trainer, and advocate, who loves reading, storytelling, and creating just about anything—from kitchen concoctions to stories, articles, songs, curriculum, and crochet pieces!

Growing up, her daily diet included a dose of Sweet Valley Twins, Sweet Valley Kids, and Sweet Valley High, only falling in love with classic books when she started learning and applying the Charlotte Mason philosophy in their homeschool and family life. Since then, her husband Mark has also jumped on the bandwagon, devouring books left and right, despite not having enjoyed it in his younger years. (Score for living books!)

Yen's favorite me-time activity is digging for treasure in one of the many branches of Booksale, while the family also loves hiking/camping up in their mountain home.

Yen and Mark are also champions for fostering and adoption, with two of their three boys coming into the family through this beautiful gift.

Yen graduated magna cum laude for B.S. in Business Administration from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, and went on to become a licensed teacher. She has also taken up units in Master's in School Management.

Are you interested in applying the Charlotte Mason philosophy to your homeschool, but don't have the first clue how to do teach your child to read? We heard you!

The Doors to Discovery: Charlotte Mason Beginning Reading our launch-pad for a lifetime of enjoying words and books, with daily lesson plans for word-building and sight reading, where you can:

- Take the guesswork out of what Charlotte Mason says about reading lessons;
- Get started with a list of some of the most common phonics rules to teach your child;
- Save time and energy instead of needing to prepare your own letter and word cards for reading lessons;
- Get an overview of dyslexia and how to provide remediation and accommodation for it;
- Have the materials needed for each lesson ready to print so you can start anytime, anywhere;
- Follow the easy instructions in manageable work boxes
- Go deeper as needed
- Re-use the resource over and over again for several children or over several years;
- and many more!



*Charlotte Mason
Philippines*